

Are Promotional Packages Sent to Influencers Contributing to Increasing Levels of Packaging Waste?

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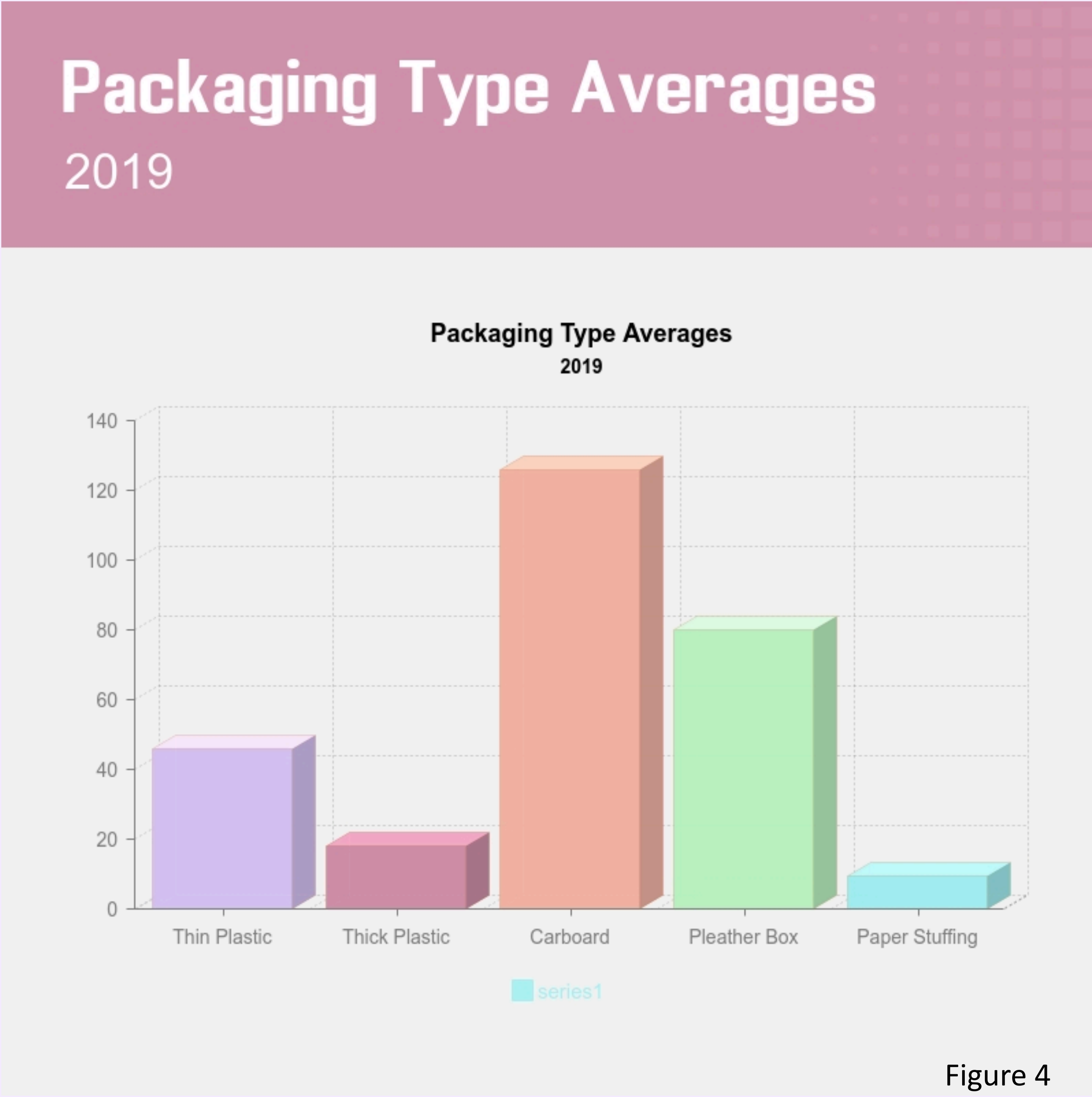
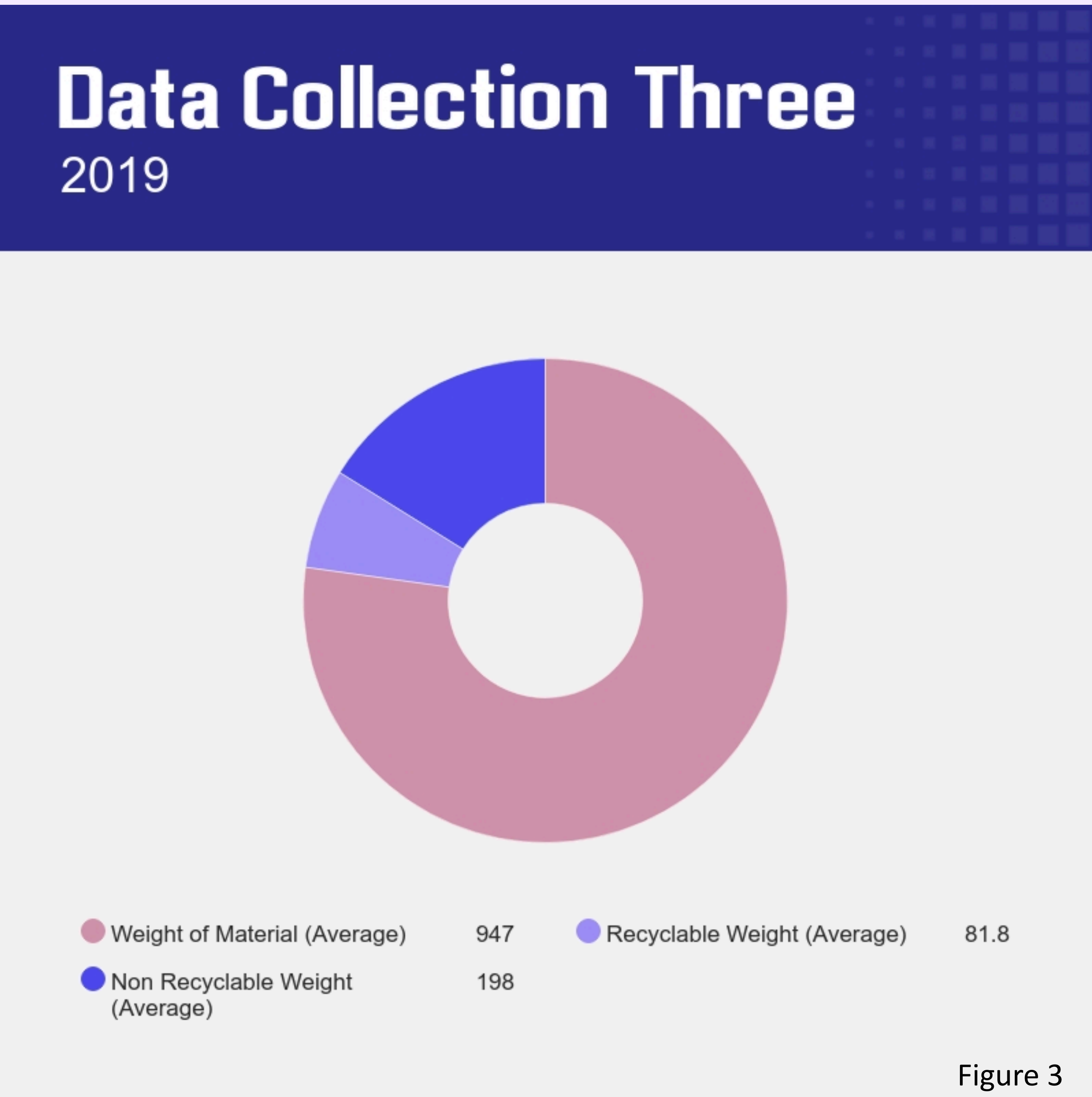
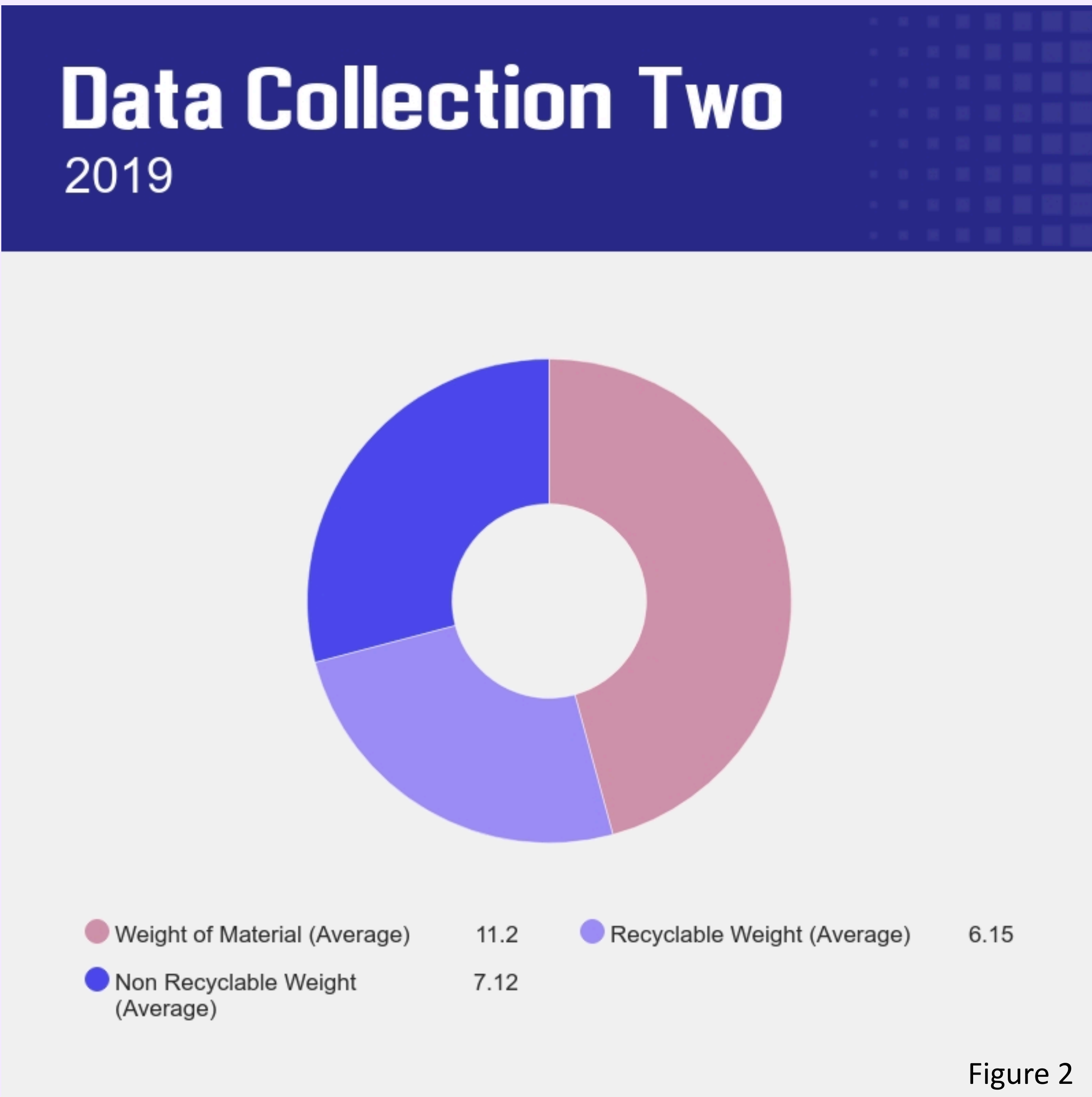
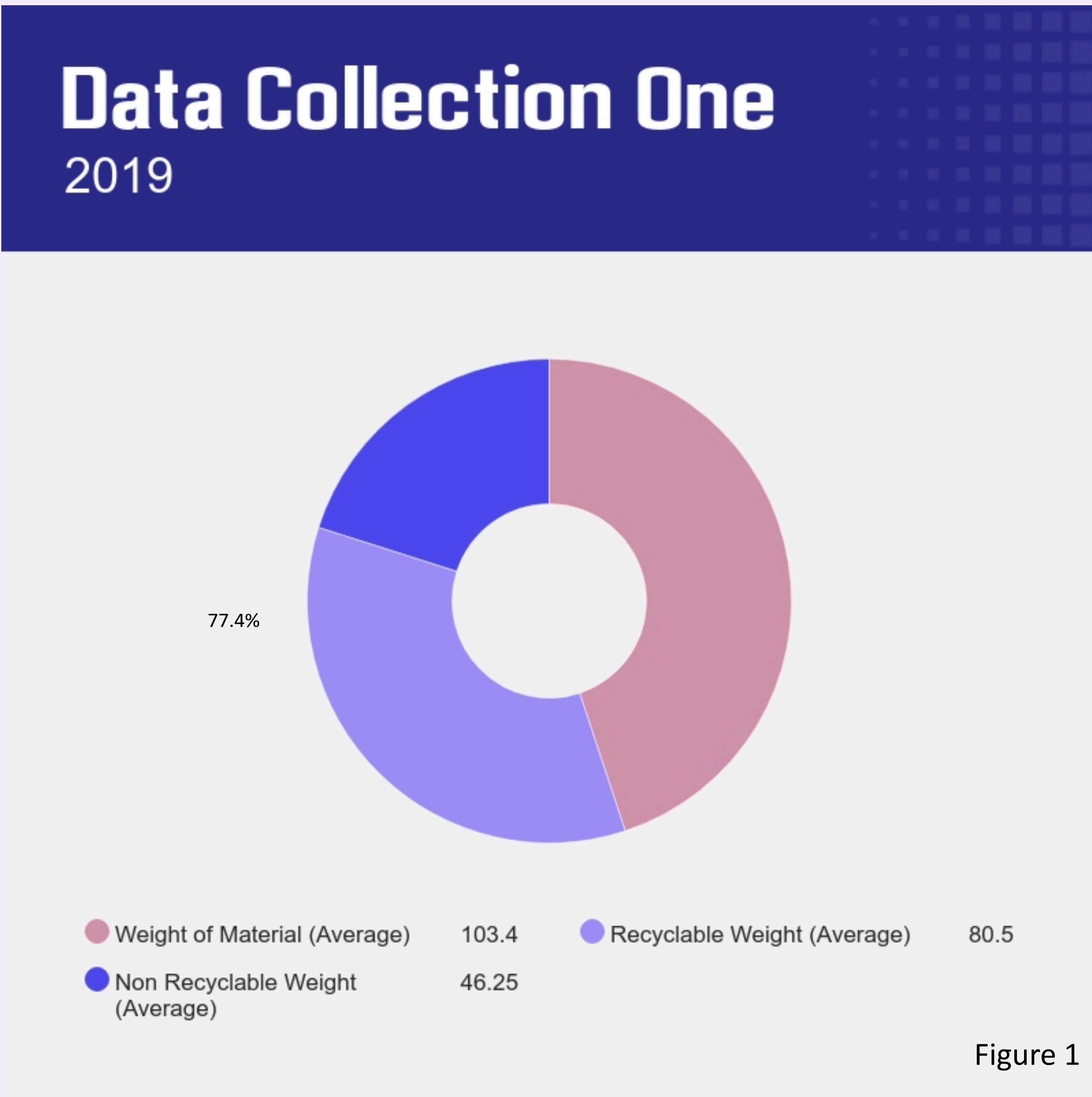
Introduction

- With the immense growth of social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, **social media marketing** is becoming one of the most active ways for brands to appeal to consumers.
- Brands began to notice the rise of social media and the impact it had on different communities, **brands realized that influencers have power to overshadow celebrities and athletes due to increasing online fame and credibility.**
- With the rise of consumerism, the seamless and easy way to purchase almost everything online, and the rise of the impact social media influencers have on products, comes some very serious and **negative environmental burdens.**
- Packaging waste has become an increasing problem that needs to be addressed **before it becomes irreversible.** (Bird J. 2018).
- I hypothesize that PR packaging sent to Influencers is packaged with a combination of recyclable and nonrecyclable materials, which **leads to higher amounts of waste.**

Methods

- My experiment consisted of collecting local influencer Amber Webb’s PR packaging waste.
- I collected four weeks worth of packaging materials she was sent.
- I collected the measurements, the weight, the type of material, and if it was recyclable or not.
- Additionally, I collected Webb’s attitudes surrounding the packaging, I prompted her with the question, “would you personally throw this packaging away or recycle it?”.
- I collected and analyzed my data in excel.

Data Collection



Results

- Each week was different, the data collection relied on the amount of PR packaging sent to Webb
- The material most widely used by brands was Cardboard, which is **recyclable.**
- Some nonrecyclable materials used by companies included a thick plastic makeup bag, a large pleather box, and soft thin plastic which was used to send most of the clothing Webb received.
- Since Webb had no control over what was sent to her, she didn’t know what to expect each week.

Discussion

- I found the amount of materials that were used to be non recyclable a bit upsetting.
- Brands need to realize how positive of an environmental impact they would create if they switched to 100% recyclable packaging, or biodegradable packaging.
- Webb’s attitudes towards most of the packaging waste was neither positive or negative.
- She was sent shoes, clothes, makeup, and accessories.
- The heaviest item sent was a parcel containing multiple items of clothing and a pair of shoes.
- Webb throws away her items, since her apartment complex doesn’t offer adequate recycling bins.

Figures 1 through 3 represent the averages of three aspects of the packaging data collection for a given week. Each week’s data depicts different results.

Figure 4 depicts the averages of the types of packing used by companies. Cardboard was used the most by companies during my data collection.

Bird, J. (2018, July 29). What A Waste: Online Retail's Big Packaging Problem. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonbird1/2018/07/29/what-a-waste-online-retails-big-packaging-problem/#5a47b85e371d>

Buelow, S., Lewis, H., & Sonneveld, K. (2010). The role of labels in directing consumer packaging waste. *Management of Environmental Quality: an international journal*, 21(2), 198-213.

Hall, D. (2017, March 13). Throwaway culture has spread packaging waste worldwide | Waste packaging. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/mar/13/waste-plastic-food-packaging-recycling-throwaway-culture-dave-hall>